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ABSTRACT

This transcript of a National Public Radio broadcast records a discussion regarding various aspects of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Areas addressed include: Title I reading classes; the legislative history of Title I; readings by children in a Title I program; parent advisory councils; Title I aides; evaluations of Title I; general and/or targeted aid; pullout and/or mainstream instruction; a Title I program in Norfolk, Virginia; a Title I lab; and the adequateness of Title I. (Author/EB)

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"TITLE ONE"

CHILD: A...

CHILD: B...

WOMAN: C...

MAN: D...

WOMAN: H...

MAN: I...

MAN: J...

CHILD: K...

MAN: L...

TEENAGER: M...

WOMAN: N...

WOMAN: O...

WOMAN: P...

MERROW: T-I-O-N-S -- Options, OPTIONS IN EDUCATION. From the ABC's of pre-school to the alphabet soup of government programs, this is OPTIONS IN EDUCATION.

TEACHER: We're learning sight-words by matching the picture to the word and the word to the word. You had to learn 200 words in order to go to MacDonalds, and this is one way. And today, we're just finishing up our words. And if you learn 200 words, you earn a trip to MacDonalds, a free lunch.

MERROW: And for that teacher's second grade students, lunch at MacDonalds is a big deal.

REINHARDT: The program her kids are in at the Stark School in Stamford, Connecticut, is also a big deal. It's called "Title One," and it's in nearly every school district in the country. Since 1966, the federal government has spent 23 billion dollars on it.

MERROW: Twenty-three billion dollars since 1966. That's a lot of money. And, in fact, Title One is the biggest federal education program of all.

REINHARDT: It's a special program for waht are called "disadvantaged" children.

MERROW: Now, disadvantaged is a funny word. It has two meanings in the Title One program. It means "poor," and it means "low achieving."

REINHARDT: Title One is the federal government's way of trying to bring disadvantaged kids up to a level is school with everyone else.

MERROW: Usually, Title One programs provide special help for the low achievers in reading and math. But, sometimes, money is used simply for dental care, clothing, and food.

REINHARDT: I'm Barbara Reinhardt.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow, and this week on OPTIONS IN EDUCATION, we're going to visit a Title One school in Connecticut.

REINHARDT: And we'll be visiting another Title One School in Norfolk, Virginia.

MERROW: And we're going to try to figure out whether that 23 billion dollars has been well spent, whether it's worth it.

REINHARDT: Now's a good time to ask that question, because Title One and the entire law it's a part of, The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, are being re-written by the Congress.

MERROW: Right now, let's go back to the Stark Elementary School in Stamford, Connecticut, where teacher Donna Burak and her second graders are playing a word game, with cards.

A VISIT TO A READING CLASS

TEACHER: All right. . . . Yeah, you did shuffle them good. Who's ready?

STUDENT: Not one match there.

TEACHER: Not one match? Well, what can I tell you? Do you know all the words?

STUDENT: Yeah, I know.

TEACHER: Who's starting? Who's first? Uh, Brian, you're first. Go ahead.

STUDENT: Ring, men, flower, door, stick, nose, children, grandmother, grandfather, barn.

MERROW: That was good. Now what is he going to do? He just read the nine words.

TEACHER: And he has to match, see if "house" matches with any of the nine words. If it doesn't, it goes in the pile.

STUDENT: Ring...rrr...ring.

TEACHER: When two vowels come together, the first one says...its...

STUDENT: Name.

TEACHER: Okay, sound it out. Come on.

STUDENT: Rain

TEACHER: Right.

MERROW: You didn't make any records of the words the kids missed.

TEACHER: Well, usually they get sight cards. I remembered them today because you were here so I didn't write sight cards for them. So now I'll go over there and I'll take out flash cards and I'll write cards right now for each child, what word they missed. And we'll have to review them next week.

MERROW: Let's check your memory. Who missed what?

TEACHER: Okay. Eric missed "pony." He missed it once. Danny missed "money." Ray missed "money." Ray also missed "gardener" when Brian had said it and Brian missed it. Okay. Michael missed the word "farmer" -- he missed it twice. He didn't miss it once; he missed it twice. Chico, he had trouble with the word "coat." There's only one other one -- "door" -- the word "door" gave Brian trouble.

MERROW: Those are second graders.

TEACHER: Yeah. Those are second graders.

MERROW: Have they made much progress during the year?

TEACHER: Well, they couldn't read when they came in. They didn't know

three-letter words. They didn't know their alphabet. I would say they're reading at the end of first grade level now, end of first. They're doing very nicely. . . . Hi, whatcha doing? . . .

MERROW: Donna Burak. She teaches in a special program for disadvantaged children called "Title One" in the Stark School in Stamford, Connecticut.

REINHARDT: Those kids are pulled out of their regular classroom to go to Miss Burak's Title One class for about half an hour a day.

MERROW: How are they selected for special help? Actually, it's pretty simple: They're doing poorly in school, worse than anyone else.

REINHARDT: They need the help the most.

MERROW: But the federal law itself, Title One, is not that simple. In fact, it's pretty complicated. The key disctinction to keep in mids is between "poor children" and "children doing poorly in school."

REINHARDT: You see, Title One began as part of Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society."

MERROW: It helps to remember the early 60s, the War on Poverty, Michael Harrington's book, "The Other America," and the belief that schools intervene and make a real difference.

REINHARDT: Charles Lee remembers those days. He was an aide to the late Wayne Morse, the senator from Oregon who was a principal author of the bill. And he also remembers that the Senate wasn't thinking only about poor children when it passed Title One.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF TITLE ONE

LEE: Certainly, the point was made over and over again that one of the problems that we were going to be facing, and the testimony showed it, that it was not only the school programs educationally were important, but as a prerequisite in many cases, it was necessary to have school breakfasts; you had to provide clothing; you had to provide medical attention. And obviously, if a kid was hungry, he damn well wasn't going to pay much attention to a morning class. So we had all of these poverty-related syndrome effects also. So, to that extent, it wasn't purely educational; it was in a part the welfare relief. And the key point was, and this was made over and over by senators in discussion in the mark-up session, they did not want to put a brand on a child for these services. They wanted these services to be in the school for everyone who needed the services.

Now, under the very nature of things, who would be most likely to receive the services, of course would be the children from poor parents who did not have the kinds of advantages that a middle class child would have in terms of language abilities, the enrichment from the home environment, and all that sort of thing. So that it was a way of welding together disparate concepts in order to make something work.

REINHARDT: Charles Lee, an education lobbyist in Washington, D.C. As Lee said, the Congress was also interested in a general aid to education bill, and Title One became that general aid, but only in part.

MERROW: How? Go back to that distinction between "poor" kids and "kids doing poorly in school." The laws says "Count the poor kids, but spend the money on the kids doing poorly."

REINHARDT: That means, the amount of money a district is eligible for depends on the number of poor kids, but once it gets the money it has to spend it on kids doing poorly.

MERROW: That compromise meant that Title One isn't just to compensate for poverty.

REINHARDT: But, that compromise made it easier for Congress to approve Title One. Because, lots of kids -- rich, poor, and in-between -- do poorly in

school.

MERROW: In fact, today, about 58 percent of kids getting Title One help are from non-poor families, a surprisingly high percentage for what's often thought of as an anti-poverty and compensatory education program.

REINHARDT: To be eligible, kids have to be educationally disadvantaged, for whatever reason.

READINGS BY TITLE ONE KIDS

WILLIAMS: My name is Andre Williams, twelve years old, and I'm going to read for you. "Children of famous stars often have a hard time proving themselves. Such is -- such was the case with Natalie Cole. At...at one time, she was thought of as only being...Nat King Cole's daughter. But today, Natalie Cole is one of the biggest stars of soul music in the United States."

DUGAN: Time's up! Hello, my name is Patrick Dugan, and I'm going to read for you. "I need an eight letter word...delicious...that spells Archie. Yummie. I said an eight letter word, not a five letter word. Score, Archie...

MERROW: Those kids are Title One fifth graders, at the Stark School in Stamford, Connecticut.

REINHARDT: We don't know if the Title One program at their school has helped their reading, but nationally Title One kids are doing well. According to a three year study by the National Institute of Education, kids in well-managed Title One programs are coming closer to the national average for their age groups.

MERROW: We'll tell you about that research later in the program.

REINHARDT: The original law, passed in 1965, said very little about parents.

MERROW: But since then, Congress has added special provisions that require "parent advisory councils" in every Title One school, and at the school district and state levels as well.

REINHARDT: These parent advisory councils, or "PACS," are advisory, but they do have one important power: To approve plans for their Title One program before the federal government puts up the money.

MERROW: "PACs" have come in for a lot of criticism. Some say they're just "rubber stamps" for the school administration

REINHARDT: The three year evaluation of Title One by the National Institute of Education, NIE, found that many states and town never even set up parent advisory councils.

MERROW: Carl Marburger is Director of the National Committee for Citizens in Education. He told me that though Title One is a good program, about one third of the parent advisory councils that do exist are just "paper programs."

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS

MARBURGER: Somebody sits in an office and writes some names down, and says, "This is our Title One committee." Or they actually put real names down and the next thing you know they never call a meeting, and so they're phoney.

MERROW: Maybe some of the same people used to vote in the elections in Chicago.

MARBURGER: Yeah, that may well be, or in Jersey City. We had a woman testify before our commission out in Los Angeles some time ago -- it wasn't Los Angeles city, but a small suburb. And she said she found out she was on Title One school, so she went to school to find out what it was. And she found out for the past three years, she'd been the chairman of the Title One advisory

committee and had signed the applications to Washington. So there's a lot of phoniness going on out there, and I think that needs to be dealt with.

MERROW: Has that been stopped?

MARBURGER: No, it's still going on. I think we ought to start doing some hammer on that and some oversight on what's happening in those states by parent citizens.

MERROW: But people don't want the parents in there.

MARBURGER: That's the case, sure. They don't want them in there. So I think parents ought to oversee what's happening, and we ought to have kind of an ombudsman or an oversight looking at what's happening. Are these actually happening? Are they taking place? Are they meeting, and what are they doing as a result of parents meeting?

REINHARDT: Carl Marburger, head of the National Committee for Citizens in Education in Columbia, Maryland. Connecticut was one of the states criticized in the NIE study for having weak parent advisory councils, but the city of Stamford got praise for its "very active" group.

MERROW: Every Title One school has a PAC, or its supposed to, and the quarterly PAC meeting at the Stark School in Stamford took place on the day I was there. It was a morning meeting, and there were six Title One teachers and aides. Four parents showed up.

A VISIT TO A PAC MEETING

TEACHER: Mrs. Rojas, and her brand new baby; two of her children are in the ESL program. And, I don't know your name.

PARENT: Robin Teal.

TEACHER: And Mrs. Thomas who works with Miss Burak in the Title One reading program. It's nice to see everybody here today.

TEACHER: This is the third meeting we've had this year, parent PAC council meeting, and we've had them at different times; some are held after school to see if we can get a bigger turnout on Wednesdays; some are held during school. And so we have different amounts of parents. We usually get different parent at the meetings, except Mrs. Rojas -- she's at every one. (laughs) And they, we had one at night. So, we've hit a variety of sections of Stamford parents. We have -- most of our parents work, so we have a hard time getting them out to a day meeting.

MERROW: Are you on the PAC here at Stark School?

PARENT: Yes.

MERROW: What does that mean? When I asked you that you seemed surprised. How often do you come to meetings?

PARENT: Whenever there's a meeting.

MERROW: And what do you do?

PARENT: I listen.

MERROW: Do you have any special duties, though, as a member of a parent advisory council?

PARENT: No.

MERROW: You're the Title One, ESL, coordinator.

TEACHER: Teacher.

MERROW: Teacher. So there's a Title One reading program; there's a Title One ESL program. Is this a PAC meeting right now?

TEACHER: This is a PAC meeting, yes. There is a problem in reaching a great many parents. Many of them will come in individually, because in most cases both parent work. So we're fortunate to have even a few.

MERROW: Well, the meeting that's just ended. You have six Title One workers and four parents.

TEACHER: True. Which can be very good, because in most cases the parents work, as I said before. So these are four parents who are not working.

MERROW: What do you ask the PAC to do?

TEACHER: Usually the PAC will attend a meeting and listen to anything that we have to offer as far as helping the children at home. So it's more of information, as far as explaining what is done in the program and how the continuation of what is done can go on in the home.

MERROW: It doesn't sound as if your parent advisory council plays much of a role at all.

TEACHER: It has at other times. In the beginning, we had more parents who were not working. But it's necessary, in this area, in order to survive, for two people to work. So that it's very difficult to get the parents together as a group.

MERROW: Why not have the meetings at night, then?

TEACHER: It's difficult to have the schools open at night.

MERROW: The meeting doesn't have to be at school.

TEACHER: No, it doesn't, and this is a possibility.

MERROW: Now, the woman I just talked with, when I asked her what her job was as a PAC member, she said after -- haltingly -- she said, "Well, I just listen." And she was clearly taking her cues from you as to what she was supposed to say. She was looking to you for some kind of --

TEACHER: -- No, she did not quite understand what you were asking. She didn't quite understand the question.

MERROW: You don't think it was that no one had ever -- it looked to me as if she had never --

TEACHER: -- I think what she thought you had meant was, "Did you attend the meeting?" I don't think she understood the question. Did you understand the question? No, she didn't.

MERROW: Are you disappointed that only four parents came to this meeting this morning?

BURAK: Yes, but I sit on the -- I'm program chairman of the Title One PAC, so I'm not that disappointed. Because I go once a month to the Title One meetings, 'cause I'm program chairman, and I see a great number of parents there. And that doesn't make me feel that disappointed because other schools sometimes only have four, and then other schools have 20. So we're not the only school that has the same problem.

MERROW: How often do you have these meetings?

BURAK: Four times a year, at least. We had one in April, I think, one during the winter, one at the beginning of the year. They'll be maybe another one, I doubt --

MERROW: I'm surprised that you're not a little bit angry. I mean --

BURAK: I'm angry, but what am I going to do? I'm angry, but what can I do? I can't force them to come. I ask them to come. I want them to come. What can I do. I can't be really mad at them. I mean, I'm mad because if the children see their parents don't care enough to come, why should they care

enough to read or to learn? I mean, there has to be some stimulation at home. But, there are so many parents who work. I mean, they need the money; they have to work to support their children. You cannot ask them to come to a parent PAC meeting and take off from work to be fired.

MERROW: Why not have the meeting at night some place other than the school since it's hard to keep the schools open?

BURAK: Some other schools have tried it and they didn't think it was that successful.

MERROW: How about providing money -- pay the parents to come, or at lease pay the babysitting costs?

BURAK: I would go for that. But who would provide the money to pay with it? Title One? They barely provide enough money for books and aides.

REINHARDT: The quarterly meeting of the parent advisory council at the Stark Elementary School in Stamford, Connecticut.

MERROW: The PAC is required by law, and a recent study concluded that Stamford's school district PAC was "very active," but the local school PACS, "if they exist at all, exist only on paper." The report also said that Stamford school officials had used delaying tactics to avoid complying with the law at the school level.

REINHARDT: When Title One was passed in 1965, the dream then was that the economic and racial barriers that separate us would crumble in the face of large scale, well-meaning, and well-managed federal programs.

MERROW: Well, maybe nothing ever works out exactly as planned, but, Title One has had an impact beyond achievement test scores and parent advisory councils. A teacher's aide in a Title One classroom told me about her first day, and about what she's learned since.

CONVERSATION WITH A TITLE ONE AIDE

AIDE: My first day, I was told to report to Stark School. I walked into the principal's office, and he told me that I would be working with Miss Burak, a Title One reading teacher. A small boy came down to the office and escorted me up to Miss Burak's reading room. (whispers)

MERROW: What was the reading room?

AIDE: It was a very small room.

MERROW: Now you're laughing now; you're not going to tell. But I'll tell. It was the boy's room that they were using.

AIDE: Men's.

MERROW: It was the men's room.

AIDE: -- Bathroom, converted into a reading room. Miss Burak was there with a group of children, Title One children. And she asked me to just sit and observe what she was doing that day so I would get accustomed to what was going on. Well, I sat there, and I watched these children coming and going. They all looked alike to me. And she reviewed sounds with them and did syllabification and all that was going through my mind was, these children all look alike; I'm trying to think back to my high school days, and is this job for me?

MERROW: Now, you should say that you're white and all the kids were black. That's all right.

AIDE: I don't think that makes any difference.

MERROW: That's all right. This is a new experience for you. Go ahead. So then what happened?

AIDE: At the end of the day, I went home. At dinnertime, I said to my husband, "Will, this is no job for me; I'll never make it." The next day, went back into school, talked to Miss Burak, and told her I didn't think that this was the job for me, as I didn't think I'd be able to go into the classroom, get these children, recognize them, bring them back to the room. She was very good, and she told me, "Take your time; we will do it together." And now, five years later, I am very pleased with the job; I love it, and I love the children, and I do know who is who in Title One reading.

MERROW: I watched you this morning, and it's clear you're comfortable with the kids and the kids are comfortable with you. But how long did it take? I mean, this is five years later. Obviously, they didn't all look alike to you for four years.

AIDE: No, I would say it took me a good three months before I could feel my way with the children and they could feel their way with me. They were as leery of me as I was of them in the beginning. But after the first three months, it all seemed to fall in place very well.

MERROW: Now, you haven't had much educational training. Does that get in your way, do you think, for being an effective teacher and worker with these kids?

AIDE: Well, no, not really. I am a high school graduate. And what I do is, Miss Burak will teach them the sounds and I will go over them with the children. I do not teach them anything on my own. All I am there for is to help reinforce what she teaches.

MERROW: Now, you go to pick up the kids. That is, you take the kids out of the regular classroom and bring them to this room -- which is no longer the old men's room; it's now a real room -- and you bring them here and work with them. Now, is there a stigma to those kids being pulled out for Title One? Are they sort of special Title One dummy kids?

AIDE: If anything, it's the opposite. Because I will go into the classroom to pick up our Title One reading children, and the other children in the classroom will say, "Please can I come; can I come with you?" We will walk in the hall, and children will come up to Miss Burak and be actually mad at her because she is not taking them for reading. It's children who do not need reading that they want to come as well as the Title One reading children.

MERROW: Are there kids in this school that you don't help? That you feel ought to be in this room for special Title One help but you just don't have time to take?

AIDE: Well, there are some children that we would be able to take, but we are fortunate because we do have two other reading teachers. And the children that Miss Burak doesn't pick up, they do go to the other reading teachers.

MERROW: You don't think you miss any kids?

AIDE: Well, there might be one or two that we do miss, but you know, we do the best we can as far as the reading. And the other two reading teachers are doing their job. So, the majority of them are being helped.

MERROW: An aide in the Title One program at the Stark School in Stamford, Connecticut.

REINHARDT: In a way, that woman's experience is one measure of the impact of Title One. She's learned a lot about herself, and about both black and white students.

MERROW: But that's not what Title One was created to do. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ESEA, which Title One is a part of, was supposed to help educate the disadvantaged. Is it doing that? What does the research show, and how good is the research itself?

REINHARDT: There's not much argument about the evaluations in the early days, the late 60s especially. They were done at the local level, often by the Title One people themselves, or by their friends.

MERROW: These evaluations often consisted of pages and pages of photographs of smiling children, with the implied conclusion that "Hey, this must be a good program; look at all those happy kids."

REINHARDT: In all, since 1965, local evaluations have cost an estimated 120 million dollars. That's all federal money, because each Title One grant included money for research and evaluation.

MERROW: There have been studies at the national level as well, and most of them have also been severly criticized. The federal government has spent at least 30 million on national studies of Title One. That's in addition to the 120 million spent at the local level.

REINHARDT: That sounds like a lot, but in fact, it's less than one percent of the total 23 billion dollars spent thus far on Title One.

MERROW: Dr. Kenneth Clark, the educator and psychologist, has doubts about the quality of evaluations that have been done over the years on Title One. He talked with Tom Looker.

EVALUATIONS OF TITLE ONE

CLARK: Certainly the evaluatory aspect of ESEA has been perverted.

LOOKER: How so?

CLARK: Well, it has not been used as a basis for using -- the results of the evaluation have not been used to increase and improve efficiency. In fact, in some places, including my own state, they have been as a basis for increasing financial support for those school systems or schools that are chronically inadequate and inefficient. See, they get extra money, they get rewarded for inefficiency. And this is a major deficiency, I think.

LOOKER: So, what change would you like to see in the new law?

CLARK: I would like to see, in addition to the evaluation or testing, monitoring and very specific requirements that that the schools and school systems that are below norm will be required to reach or approach the norm within a specified period of time, or else lose the funds.

REINHARDT: New York educator and psychologist Kenneth Clark, talking with Tom Looker at station WFCR in Amherst, Massachusetts. It's true that there's no limit on the number of years that a school can get Title One funds. In part, that's because the grade school population, that is, the kids, change every year as the sixth graders move on and new first graders enter school.

MERROW: There is one possible check in a lot of communities, and that is the parents, who might make trouble for any school administrator who got extra money year after year and didn't make improvements.

REINHARDT: Dr. Patricia Albjerg Graham is Director of The National Institute of Education, the federal education research agency which just spent fifteen million dollars over the past three years evaluating Title One, under orders from Congress.

MERROW: NIE selected 100 Title One school districts to study, instead of drawing a truly random sample from among the 14,000 school districts getting Title One money. I asked Dr. Graham if under those conditions, the study results were accurate.

THE NIE EVALUATION OF TITLE ONE

GRAHAM: Yes, I think it is accurate, and in fact, I think it is more accurate by virtue of the fact that it does not need some statistician's notion of reliability, because the question that we are really interested in is, "Does Title One work when certain other things are held constant?" And this study, by virtue of the places we selected to look at Title One, held certain other things constant, namely management of the Title One program, continuity of staff, and training of staff. So I think it's better than a random study. That's been one of the difficulties of previous evaluations.

MERROW: But, can you generalize, then, about all of Title One? Or can you only say Title One works under these conditions?

GRAHAM: I've learned, since I came to Washington, to summarize 15 million dollars and three years of research into one sentence: Title One works when it's managed well. The last phrase -- when it's manages well -- is the key phrase. The point is that Title One is a very effective way of getting money to districts that need it, to provide additional services for children who need it, and those children then learn when all of this is managed well.

MERROW: When it's managed well. It's very clear from your report that the mis-management, what there's been -- a lot of it's been right here in Washington in the Office of Education. What's been the impact of your critical report?

GRAHAM: I would say that our report, rather than being critical, simply pointed to areas that needed immediate improvement. And I think that the effect in Washington has been to assist those people within the federal agencies who, in fact, were happy to have their hand strengthened to enforce some of the regulations regarding Title One.

MERROW: You say "rather than being critical." Well, let me disagree, because the report says that states and local communities were getting contradictory signals regarding what was going to happen when violations were found from different places within the Office of Education. That's mismanagement.

GRAHAM: What we say is that the management very much needs to be strengthened. There is no doubt about that. And that part of the responsibility for strengthening that comes from Washington, where the funds are sent. Part of the additional responsibility for improving the management rests in the states and localities. But the issue of contradictory signals is absolutely right, that no school person at the district can function effectively if that person is receiving contradictory signals from the places where they get the money.

REINHARDT: Dr. Patricia Albjerg Graham, Director of The National Institute of Education in Washington, D.C.

MERROW: Confused signals from Washington, and red tape generally. Those are common complaints from states and local communities.

REINHARDT: Some educators go further. Robert Schrader is the State Education Superintendent in Wyoming, and he'd like all federal aid to be "general," not targeted for special categories like disadvantaged children.

GENERAL V.S. TARGETED AID

SCHRADER: I -- the people with whom I deal -- are very much opposed to categorical kind of aid. We think that local systems of deliverance in educational programs know better what the needs of the community are, know better what the learner needs are. We think that we have the expertise, the ability, the integrity to provide programs that will meet our needs without categorical type grants. We would like to see the money come in without any strings attached.

MERROW: You'd like the federal government, in effect, to once a year send you a big check and say, "Spend this on disadvantaged kids, or just spend it on schools."

SCHRADER: Right. Because we do not have categorical aid in the state of Wyoming coming from the state legislature. Now, I think that we can prove that we can handle the funds appropriately and do the job without categorical aid, without, you know, big brother, sitting up there with the beedy eye, watching us. All of our state funds are distributed by general formula. We do not have categorical aid in terms of state funds. And I think that our schools do a good job. Essentially, we feel that categorical aid is provided by Congress and the U.S. Office of Education because they don't trust the local agency. We think that we can be trusted.

MERROW: Now, as they say, regarding the possibility of ESEA not being

categorical aid, as they say where I grew up, you're doing what they call "spitin' into the wind." Not much chance of ESEA becoming general aid, is there?

SCHRADER: No, I don't think there's any chance at all. So, obviously, ESEA is going to be categorical aid. I think our big concern then here would be that we not have too many strings attached and have enough flexibility in the program that we can devise programs in our area that will fit our needs. You know, you cannot impose the restrictions that you have to have in an urban situation in New York on a rural state like Wyoming. You have entirely different problems with entirely different needs.

REINHARDT: Wyoming Superintendent of Education, Robert Schrader.

MERROW: The new Title One will remain categorical, that is, targeted for disadvantaged children.

REINHARDT: In fact, there wasn't even much of a fight about that, largely because the Congress and President Carter added enough money to the pot to avoid argument.

MERROW: Congress and the President pointed to the positive results of that NIE study to support their request for extra money.

REINHARDT: Some of the conclusions: First graders in Title One programs made an average gain of 12 months in reading and 11 months in math, over a seven month period.

MERROW: Third graders in Title One made an average gain of eight months in reading and 12 in math, over the same seven month period.

REINHARDT: Title One programs are either "mainstream" or "pullout." In the "pullout" programs, the kids are pulled out of the regular class and given special instruction. In mainstream programs, the kids get the special help in the regular classroom, along with the non-Title One kids.

MERROW: Which works better, pullout or mainstream? Well, the NIE study concludes that mainstream is better, especially for first graders.

REINHARDT: That comes as a shock to many educators who've been using the pullout approach.

MERROW: In fact, most Title One instruction is of the "pullout" variety. Dr. Patricia Albjerg Graham, Director of the National Institute of Education, says that pullout may not be better, but it's easier.

PULLOUT V.S. MAINSTREAM INSTRUCTION

GRAHAM: They are pullout programs in large part because it is much easier to audit the federal funds that are used for Title One pullout than it is in mainstream.

MERROW: Do you think the school people knew that? I mean, logically, they would say to themselves it would be better to keep the kids in the same class, but the damn federal government is making it hard for us to keep track of the funds, so we'd better pull them out? Is that the way it worked?

GRAHAM: I think, probably, that there is something of a split in many school communities. I was at a school in the upper midwest very recently, in which the principal of the school which had a Title One program was furious at the requirements that he perceived, incorrectly, as federal requirements for pullout. He said he couldn't stand it. He said, "The federal government's making life so hard for me with pullout. And I said, "The federal government doesn't make life hard for you with pullout; there's an intervening step that says you've got to pullout. And that intervening step is somewhere between the state and the district level, before you get to the level of the building principal which is worried about auditing the funds.

MERROW: Dr. Patricia Albjerg Graham, Director of The National Institute of Education, in Washington, D.C.

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REINHARDT: Do you go to lab?

STUDENT: Yes.

REINHARDT: How's it different from the classroom?

STUDENT: 'Cause you don't have to do no work, but you have fun things to do.

REINHARDT: Does it help you? Do you learn?

STUDENT: Yes. You have a lot of fun. You get to play with puzzles and stuff. And you get to learn a lot of stuff. We get to cook and stuff. You get to do good things, like play and stuff. Do easy work.

REINHARDT: Easy work? What makes it easy?

STUDENT: If you know how to do it, it just makes it easy.

REINHARDT: You mean like math and reading and things like that?

STUDENT: Yes. Have a lot of fun doing that.

REINHARDT: Is the stuff you do in the lab to learn how to read and do math -- is it more fun than what you do in the classroom learn the same things?

STUDENTS: Yeah.

REINHARDT: Why, why?

STUDENT: 'Cause in the other class, if you get it wrong, she'll pluck you upside the head and stuff. But in the lab, they'll give it to you, and if you get it wrong then they just tell you to go back and do it over. They just give you credit for it.

MERROW: Those are Title One kids in a pullout Title One program at the Meadowbrook Elementary School in Norfolk, Virginia.

STUDENT: I spent several days at Meadowbrook recently, talking with teachers, kids, and principal Eddie Hall. Meadowbrook has a pullout program, and the Title One kids are taken to what they call "the lab" for special help.

A TITLE ONE PROGRAM IN NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

REINHARDT: Let's pretend that I'm a first grade student who is going to be in the Title One program. What all will happen to me this year?

HALL: Well, there will be a lot of exciting things, some hard work, but gosh, if you're a participant in the lab program you get to -- Well, let's really start with a routine type of day. You would be involved with other first grade students, going to the lab for approximately an hour each day during the week, during which you would work maybe for six or eight weeks in one of three areas: home economics, reading, or mathematics. You know, home ec's kind of different in elementary school. Although we do a lot of cooking in first grade and kindergarten; we have a real stove over there, and an oven, sinks. It's like a house, you know, in one corner. So you really have a lot of fun. There are many fascinating machines that you'll learn to operate and work with. So you'll really have exploring and learning how to use these things. Plus, you've got three teachers, in addition to the one teacher in your room, plus two aides that will all be interested in working with you during the year.

Now, some of the other things, in addition to all these things I've talked about -- you will go to camp, or have an opportunity to go to camp, twice each year, fall and spring, and also in the summertime if you want to go for a week in the summer.

REINHARDT: And each of those, in the fall and spring, is a week?

HALL: Yes. And the summer camp -- all of these are day camps. And the camp, gee whiz, it's like being out in the country. I remember, I've been there several times. You've got a tremendous Olympic-size swimming pool, you have an arts and crafts area, you're right on the water, lots of trees, games. All this sounds like strictly play, but there are a lot of opportunities for science out at the camp because of the nature trains and this kind of thing. And it's really a great, lot of fun. You learn to swim. So camp is something I used to really enjoy going out and watching students participate in.

REINHARDT: Now that sounds great, but besides science and nature studies and that kind of thing, am I going to do anything with reading and math while I'm out there?

HALL: You also will continue in reading and math, not quite as hard as you would work here at Meadowbrook. But you would continue to work on your skills there. But because so many other things are going on, we're trying to give you an added experience, some added enrichment and fun, by involving you in the other things that we've talked about. In addition to camp, if you're in the lab you take a lot of interesting field trips to enable you to see many things that our community offers in the way of historical, community projects, this type of thing. So, you know, the lab -- most children that I've talked to really enjoy the lab, and I'll think you'll enjoy it, because you get the lab, plus you get what you do normally in your classroom. So you've really got to be on top of things to handle all of that.

A VISIT TO THE TITLE ONE LAB

HALL: Hello, Marcus.

STUDENT: Hi.

HALL: Your mom called me yesterday; she was worried about you.

STUDENT: I know, I know.

REINHARDT: What's happening now is that the kids actually have to leave their classrooms to go to the lab to go outside the building. Do the other students make fun of them?

HALL: No; you would think so initially. But I think most of the other students maybe are envious of them because of the extra things that they do. And it becomes an accepted routine pretty soon. You know, they get up at a certain time, go to the lab, and it just comes to be a thing everybody accepts.

REINHARDT: Looks as if the first graders and kindergarteners are coming -- or second graders, right?

HALL: Right. You'll see this group right now involved here. Golly, that looks like a jungle of educational material and bodies and chalkboards. Really a beautiful, almost a place you wouldn't mind to live in, almost, it's so nice. Carpeted floor and flourescent lights, and your own air conditioning unit, and your own bathroom, and everything's so nice and clean and bright, and happy and cheerful.

REINHARDT: Later, Eddie Hall took me to the home-making area of the lab. That's where reading and math concepts are reinforced by application to actual problems like measuring for recipes.

STUDENT: Um!

TEACHER: Does it taste different from the corn? Okay, ready for the next one that we're going to have? What does it say? Charles, remember that word?

STUDENT: Pretzels.

TEACHER: Pretzels, okay. How do I know these are my pretzels?

STUDENTS: Because they're shaped like sticks.

TEACHER: Okay, you can see it through the bag. Do you see any word on the bag that tells me about it?

STUDENT: Yeah.

TEACHER: Okay, can you spell that word for me?

STUDENT: P-R-E-T ... Z-E-L.

TEACHER: Okay. So that tells me it's pretzels. Has anyone ever tasted pretzels? ... Okay, everybody knows what pretzels taste like. Let's pass the bag and take one before we continue. Okay, you can eat your peanuts, and then, let's push all of our shells to the middle of the table so that we can get ready to start putting all of our ingredients together. Everybody ready to do some measuring? There's our recipe. One big cup of peanuts, right? If I take my measuring cup and I put in peanuts, just like that with the shells on, til I get a whole cup of peanuts. Now that's one cup of peanuts, isn't it? But we said we didn't want the shells, did we?

STUDENTS: No.

TEACHER: Do you think when you crack all those peanuts open that we're going to have a whole cup of peanuts to put in there?

STUDENTS: No.

TEACHER: Are we going to have more peanuts or less peanuts.

STUDENTS: Less. More. (various answers)

TEACHER: But if we're going to take the shells off, ...

STUDENT: It's a lot bigger.

TEACHER: Okay, Preston. When we take all those big shells off, they take up the room, so we're going to have less peanuts, so we're going to need more than that one cup, aren't we? ... Okay, you can put your peanuts into the cup, but we need a whole big cup of peanuts. Okay, that looks good for now. Okay, we've got -- what is this called?

STUDENT: A skillet.

TEACHER. Okay, a skillet or a frying pan What did we use it for last time?

STUDENT: Cook doughnuts.

TEACHER: Cook doughnuts.

STUDENT: Round doughnuts.

TEACHER: Round doughnuts. Are we going to put the oil in it again this time?

STUDENTS: No, no way.

TEACHER: No, we're going to look at our recipe, aren't we? And we're going to put in some --

STUDENT: Lollypops.

TEACHER: Lollypops?

STUDENT: Butter.

TEACHER: Okay, we're going to put in a whole stick of butter.

STUDENT: Margarine.

TEACHER: Margarine. ... Now, if I leave that stick of margarine in there,

is anything going to happen to it?

STUDENTS: Shrink. I see it shrinking right now.

TEACHER: Is it shrinking? What do we need for it to shrink down?...

REINHARDT: On the other side of the lab, which is one big room with bookshelves as dividers, other kids were working on their reading skills. That's where I went next.

TEACHER: I'll say the word, and you tell me the opposite. Back.

STUDENT: Back?

TEACHER: What's the opposite of back?

STUDENT: Front.

TEACHER. Good. Never. Richard? Never. I will never do that again.

STUDENT: Always.

TEACHER: All right. Before.

STUDENT: After.

TEACHER: Very good. Old.

STUDENT: Old, new.

TEACHER: Night.

STUDENT: Day.

TEACHER: Large.

STUDENT: Small.

TEACHER: Down, Ricky?

STUDENT: Up.

TEACHER: Boy, you're sharp today. Last. You are the last in line.

STUDENT: Front.

TEACHER: Another word. Another word.

STUDENT: First.

TEACHER: Good. That was very good.

REINHARDT: At the same time, other kids in the reading lab were working in small groups, often two or three kids, with all kinds of machines, teaching machines. Why don't you tell me what you're doing while you're doing it.

TEACHER: Tell her what you're doing.

STUDENT: I'm winding it up 'til I get the dot down here.

TEACHER: Why the dot? Why do you have to look for the dot?

STUDENT: Because it wouldn't go in right, and it would be upside-down.

REINHARDT: Oh, so then you turn the light on, and you roll the film ahead until it gets to the right place, is that right?

STUDENT: Uh-huh.

REINHARDT: And then you have to focus it so you can read. What does

that say?

STUDENT: Which word is different?

TEACHER: This is a word discrimination film. Each line will present three words. (Student reads along with teacher) Two words have the same ending. They also have the same sound. One word in each line is different. What does different mean?

STUDENT: One word is different from the other?

TEACHER: It's not like the other.

TEACHER: (with student) It has a different sound. Look for the word that is different. Here are three words.

STUDENT: Black, sack, pack.

TEACHER: (to Reinhardt) They need to hear the sounds. Now, in the regular classroom they're not equiped with all of these things. The teacher says them; she makes the sounds; her sound may be one thing one day and something another day, you know, that's true too.

REINHARDT: Well, I'm wondering if that might not be one of the attractions of the lab, that the equipment, each child gets to deal with it, gets to make it go.

TEACHER: Well, I'm sure it is an attraction. 'Cause then he feels, as I tell him, "You're special. This is the icing on the cake, that you get over here, you know, over and above what you get in your regular classroom." 'Cause they have language arts in the classroom; they have reading groups. But then, when they come over here, they get a little more.

REINHARDT: Do you get to talk at all with their regular teachers?

TEACHER: Yes, I do. I have several informal conferences; not too many formal conferences. Because that will have to be done in the morning, and they have so many things to do. But many of them give me sheets, information sheets, where I ask for specific skills they wish for me to work with them on. In fact, the first graders teachers gave me vocabulary words every week. And that works quite well, because even though we test them and make diagnoses of their needs, there are so many things that need. We find that if we don't do that, we're working on one need, and they're doing something else in the classroom. And that's confusing.

REINHARDT: I asked a couple of regular classroom teachers about the lab, whether there's any conflict between Title One and the regular program. They told me, "No conflict," and the lab experience is making a difference, in reading and in math.

TEACHER: (to student) Can you put one number under ones for ten?

STUDENT: No.

TEACHER: No. Okay, what are we going to have to do?

STUDENT: Put two in there.

TEACHER: We're going to have to put two numbers, right? All right, one ten and zero ones. Okay, so that means we're going to take away the one. All right, we're going to take away the ten ones, then we're going to use the ten figure. Okay, would you buy one ten, and how many ones? What does the zero stand for?

STUDENT: Nuttin.

TEACHER: All right, it stands for no ones. Can you say, "No ones?"

STUDENT: No ones.

TEACHER: Now I want to change it. Now I want you to put two ones in the ones column. All right, just take two and put them there. Now, does this say what we have there?

STUDENT: No.

TEACHER: Okay, what's that that we have there?

REINHARDT: (to teacher) Can you imagine mainstreaming the kids? I mean, NIE has done a study which indicates that in cases, where it's done, works very well. I would think then you wouldn't have to pay money for a mobile unit. You know, you would still be able to pay for the teachers, conceivably you could still buy the equipment; I'm not sure how it would be used. But, wouldn't that be better, if it works?

TEACHER: Mainstreaming can probably work some places where all the people are for it. When I worked in special ed a few years back and we tried to do mainstreaming, many teachers really did not go for extra people being in the room. And in pullout, you have an opportunity to really work with the kids. Again, you can do so many more things that you couldn't do in a little classroom. You couldn't do cooking activities. You wouldn't have the whole team approach as we have here. Because if we have a child today that really needs an application skill or a math skill that I teach, then tomorrow I can send him to home ec. And he can do his application skills, and then come back the next day here. There's no possible way that all three of us could go or all five of us could go into anybody's classroom, and if we did, we couldn't get to all of the kids in all of the classrooms in a day or a week. This way, every kid gets to come every day for an hour and a half or an hour.

REINHARDT: I'm now in the classroom of Mary Jones who is a second grade teacher. Her students are now at P.E., so we have a little time to talk. What about those ten? When they come back, do you ever sense that they feel somehow different or ostracized, not part of the group? Especially if the 16 who are left here have gone into other areas that they haven't gone into yet?

TEACHER: Well, now I don't feel that they feel self-conscious in any way whatsoever. Because to me, they're happy to go to lab. When lab time comes, they're happy because they feel they get to do certain things that we don't get to do. And it gives them a sense of success, as well as the other children who have a feeling of accomplishment and success.

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STUDENT: The children that are smart, you know, they have to work in the room. And the lab children get to go downstairs and do what they feel.

REINHARDT: Is that really what happens? Do they just go over there and play?

STUDENT: Mostly, yes. They go down there and they cut out things, and stuff like that.

REINHARDT: Do you think they're not learning?

STUDENT: I don't know. Maybe they are. Maybe they're learning things just for fun like I was in second grade.

REINHARDT: How about you? Did you ever go to lab?

STUDENT: No.

REINHARDT: What kind of kids go to lab?

STUDENT: Kids that's slow learning in school.

STUDENT: Not always. I got to go, and I wasn't slow learning in school.

REINHARDT: Is it a bad thing to be a slow learner?

STUDENT: No. Most people can't help it. They try.

REINHARDT: What causes them to be slow learners?

STUDENT: They don't listen. They do other things. Fool around by the teacher, while the teacher's talking. And telling her something to do that they don't do.

REINHARDT: Does anybody ever make fun of the kids who go to the lab?

STUDENT: Sometimes. They make fun of Martha.

STUDENT: Most people make fun, but I don't pay no attention to them, because I thought the lab was real nice.

REINHARDT: Did you have some people make fun of you?

STUDENT: Yeah, but I paid no attention to them. I told them ain't nothing the matter with going to the lab. It'll help you read and write. It'll help you in the things you need the most in.

REINHARDT: What kinds of things did they say?

STUDENT: They were saying children who go to the lab were stupid and dumb. But I told them, I don't care. Long as they help me to read and write, it's okay with me.

STUDENT: The people who go to camp, that's why they go to camp -- to learn more, I said, "So?" And then they started hitting on me and stuff. I didn't paid any attention to them, because they need to go one year too.

STUDENT: Like, those people who go to lab will go on to the next grade, and those people that's joking you might stay back. They'll fail and have to repeat it.

REINHARDT: You think you have a little bit better chance in the lab of going on to the next grade.

STUDENT: Uh-huh. And when they try to make fun of me, that's all you got to say is you want to learn.

STUDENT: I think the lab should be made for everyone, not just the children who can't do certain things. I think it should be shared.

* * *

REINHARDT: Those children are in the Title One program at the Meadowbrook Elementary School in Norfolk, Virginia. About 130 of the total enrollment of 500 are in the Title One program. Another 55 kids are elibigle for Title One at Meadowbrook, but there isn't enough money to pay for a program for them.

MERROW: That's the general rule around the country, by the way. Title One has never been fully funded by the Congress; so in every Title One school district -- and that's 90 percent of the districts in the country -- there are eligible kids who aren't getting special help.

REINHARDT: Congress is rewriting the bill now, and there's talk about extending Title One services to junior and senior high schools.

MERROW: The new appropriations bill calls for about three billion dollars for Title One. But, even that won't be enough to pay for programs for all eligible kids.

REINHARDT: And there's always the question of whether Title One, or any school program, can really make a difference for poor children. That's a question that Jocelyn Rice, a Title One teacher at Meadowbrook, often asks herself.

IS TITLE ONE ENOUGH?

RICE: We have some that it takes an awful lot of motivation. Even at that, we can't seem to move them. I don't know; it is as if they don't want

to. And that troubles me. The majority are not like that. But just one case like that disturbs me. You know, with so much, and you present it. Then you have to stop and think, now these kids have so many problems at home. You find out -- become aware of the home problems and you'll understand why they are like that. And if you get rid of some of those, you know, then they'll move on. But it has to be a little motivation within the home. But what we do is, continue to work with those children, and many times we bring them around, you know. And we're quite happy about that progress. But, when you see a little first grader come, and he's so troubled that you're giving him almost one to one, and his mind wanders off and he tells you about something unpleasant that happened at home, well, well funds won't help that -- won't remedy that. Do you think they will?

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REINHARDT: Copies of this OPTIONS IN EDUCATION program on Title One are available either as written transcripts or cassette tapes.

MERROW: For the transcript: 50 cents. For the tape: five dollars.

REINHARDT: And here's the address: National Public Radio -- Education, Washington, D.C. 20036.

MERROW: When you write, ask for program number 125, called simply, "Title One."

REINHARDT: Another thing you might like to have is our schedule for the next three months, and that's free. Don't forget to include the call letters of your local NPR station.

MERROW: Some of the material for this program came from Tom Looker of station WFCR, Amherst, Massachusetts.

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MERROW: I'm John Merrow, and this is NPR, National Public Radio.

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